

# Community Engagement Field Report: Bristol Place Metanoia Centers, Inc.

---

Jared Dunn

LIS 418 – Community Engagement

3/14/2011

Updated with new interviews on 5/8/2011

## **Abstract:**

This report is the result of a semester-long community engagement project with the Bristol Place Metanoia Centers, a community center and community advocacy organization located at 1313 N. Clock St., in North Champaign. The goals of the project were for students to embed themselves within an organization for the duration of the semester, learn as much as possible about both the organization and the community and their uses of information and technology, and finally, to produce work that would be of lasting benefit to the organization and the community they serve.

This process produced two assigned deliverables: this individual research report, as well as a video to be made in conjunction with other organizations and classmates about how our community partners can use the coming UC2B broadband project to improve their operations and better serve their community. The video project aims to integrate our research about our individual organizations with what we learn in class and in our related work on the UC2B project, and create a document that will be of value both for our organizations and for the UC2B project as a whole.

In addition to the assigned work, I have also used the opportunity of collecting this data to help my community partner organize and digitize their files, revamp their website and install a CMS, and begin to put more information online in preparation for the arrival of UC2B. In this way, research, practice, and scholarship are combined and reinforce one another, to the benefit of all of the parties involved.

## **Researcher name and contact information:**

Jared Dunn

[jddunn@gmail.com](mailto:jddunn@gmail.com)

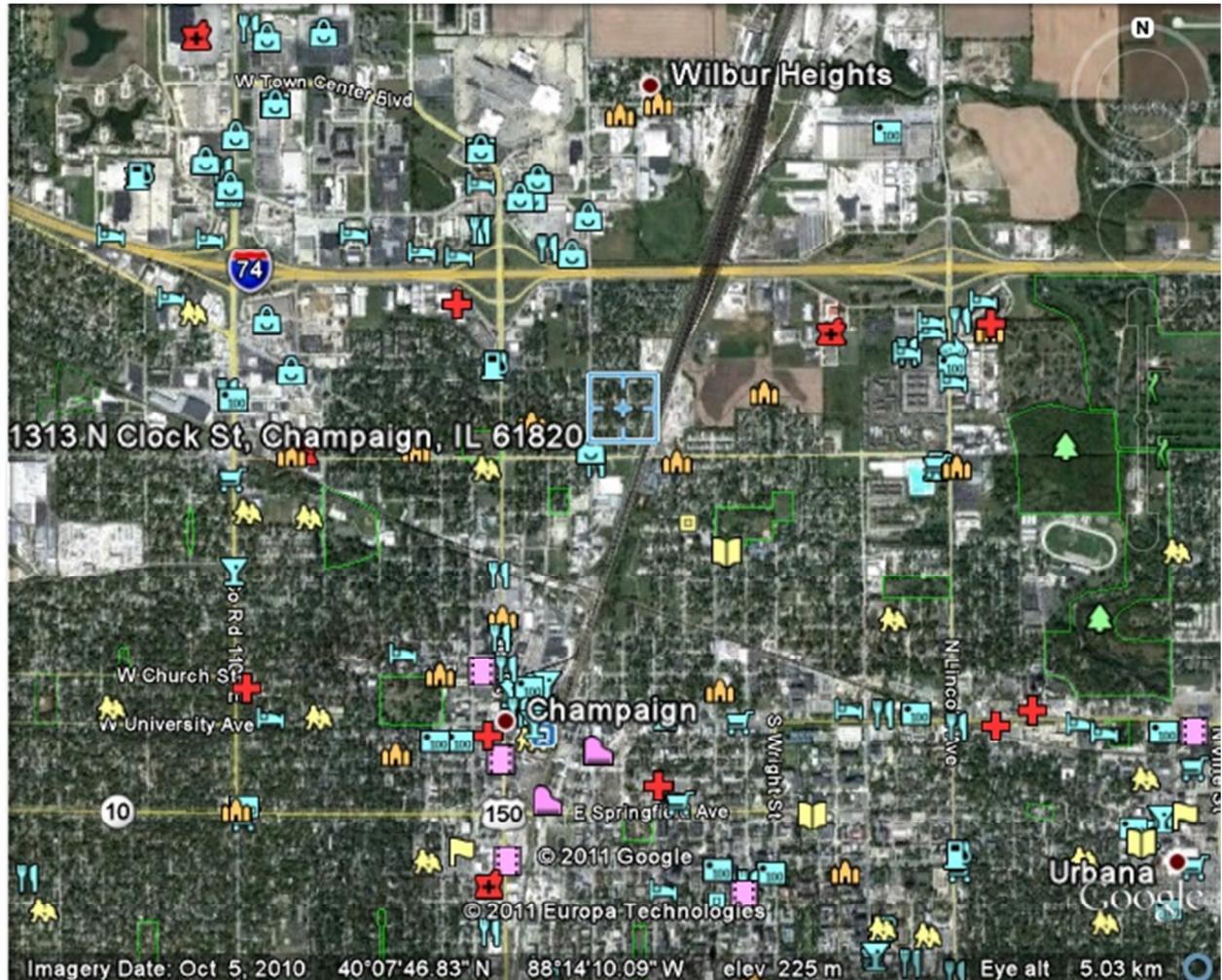
217.xxx.xxxx

<http://jareddunn.org>

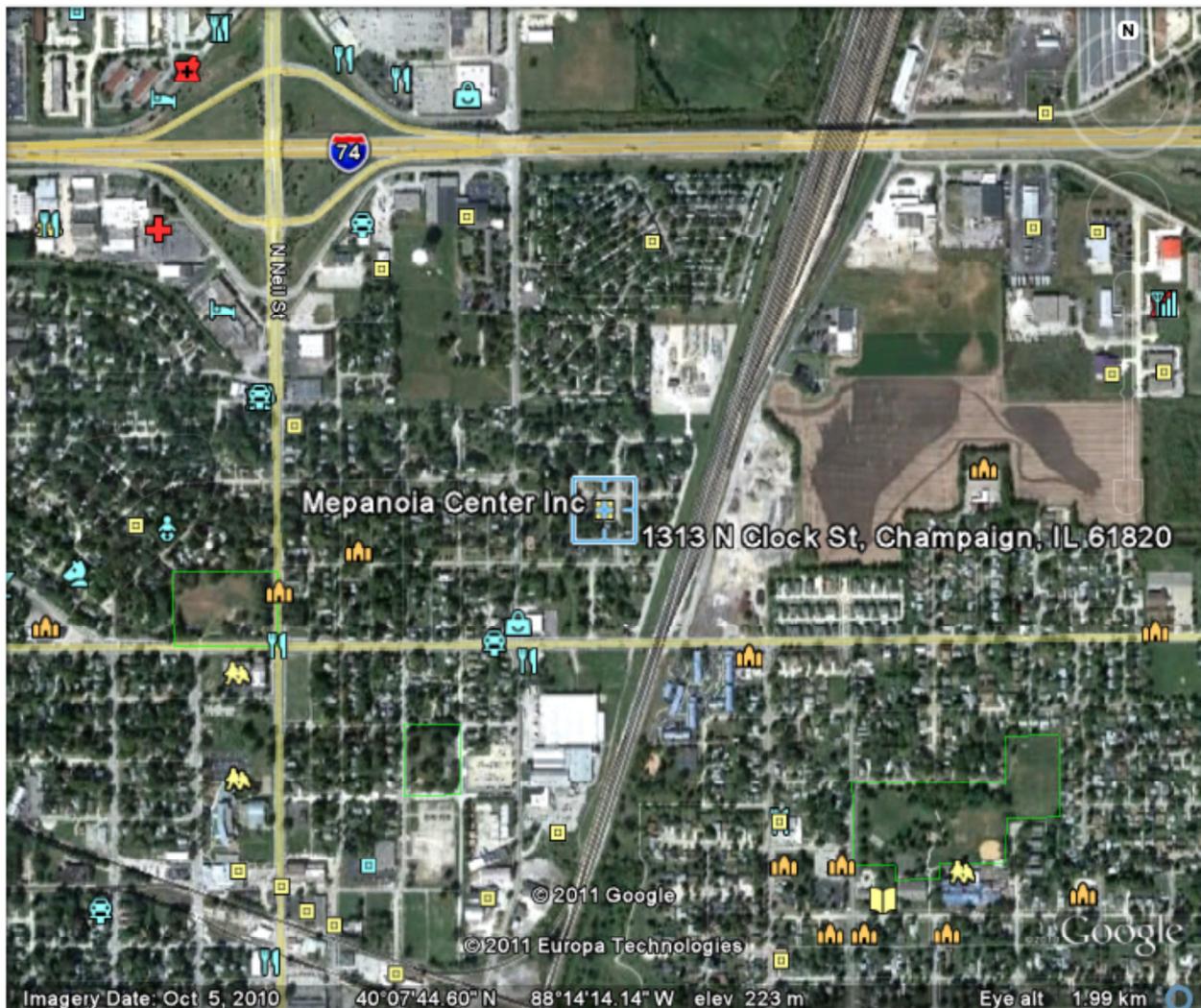
**1. The spatial community:**

**a. a map of relevant physical locations**

**Wide Area**



**Close Up**



**b. census data (neighborhood and city wide on constituency and issue specific data)**

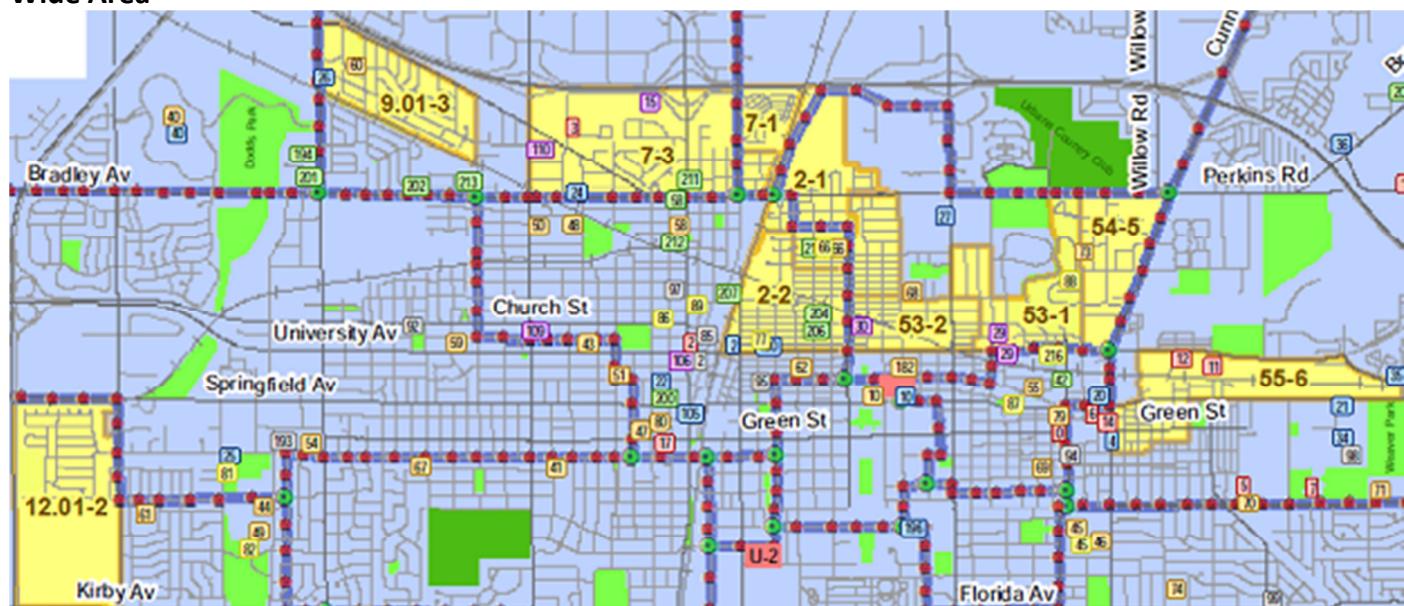
For the Census data, I focused in on the poverty and housing issues, as those are most directly relevant to Metanoia Centers' work. I chose Census Tract 7, as that was the unit that most closely encompassed the geographical area served by Metanoia Centers. All values are from the 2000 Census data.

This data clearly show that Bristol Place is a majority-minority community, and that the neighborhood fares dramatically worse than its surroundings by almost every measure on the issues relevant to Metanoia Centers's work. This data clearly establishes that the needs they attempt to meet are urgent, and that they have targeted their efforts well and matched them to the most pressing issues their community faces.

Census Product	Census Tract 7	Champaign County
Population	2,586	145,926
% Caucasian	43.1	78.8
% African-American	39.2	10.1
% Hispanic	5.9	2.2
Median Household Income	\$28,468	\$37,780
% Unemployed	7.0	3.7
% Residents with High School Diploma or Higher	70.4	91.0
% Residents with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	7.5	38.0
% Families below poverty level	16.9	6.9
% Individuals below poverty level	19.3	16.1
% in Management, professional, and related occupations	17.4	42.2
% Housing Rental	43.2	44.3
% Housing Owner-Occupied	56.8	55.7
% Total Housing Vacancy	12.6	7.8
Median Housing Value	\$49,200	\$94,700
Median Gross Rent	\$474	\$540
% Householders in same residence from 1995-2000	42.7	42.5
% Householders in same county from 1995-2000	76.7	66.5
% of Homes with No Telephone Service	8.4	2.2

### c. UC2B target area map

#### Wide Area



### **Close Up**



As these maps establish, Bristol Place Metanoia Centers is located in the target area (7-1) for the rollout of Fiber to the Home broadband under the UC2B project. Metanoia Centers are designated as an Anchor Institution under the project, and thus would have received fiber access regardless of their location, but the fact that the community surrounding them will also be wired for fiber opens up many possibilities for the organization. As a neighborhood community center, Metanoia Centers can take advantage of a networked neighborhood to amplify their efforts, better communicate with their constituents, and share resources with other community organizations doing complementary work.

## **2. Organizational profile:**

### **a. leadership**

President: Rev. Charles B. Jackson

Vice President and Executive Director: Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes

Board:

Rev. Charles B. Jackson (Pastor)

Elder Robert L. Massey (Pastor)

Ms. Karla Shelby (Community Member)

Versie Pettigrew (Community Member)

Ralph Edwards (Community Member)

Past Board Members:

Sherry Gray (Community Member)

Joan Villa (Community Member)  
Carla Carreston (Community Member)  
Daniel Walker (Community Member)

The board is changing soon, and they are looking for 8 new members and making an organizational transition.

#### **b. structure**

- Faith-Based, 501(c)3
- Neighborhood community center
- Certified CDE, Dept. of the Treasury – “Certification as a C.D.E. means Metanoia Centers has access to both technical and financial assistance in our capacity building as an emerging CDFI. This allows us to provide technical assistance to residents on managing their personal finances through consumer education programs as well as providing technical assistance and consulting services to newly formed small businesses located in distressed communities.”
- An active part of state and national community organizing and advocacy networks, through Illinois People’s Action and National People’s Action.

No staff currently.

#### Past staff:

Patricia Martin (Neighborhood Services Coordinator)  
Harold Muhammad (COO)  
Eon Schwab  
Ayeshia Johnson  
Kai Wilson

Occasional volunteers through community service programs or from affiliates and project partners.

#### Info on structure from a grant application, 2003

Metanoia Center's Board meets monthly and includes the Project Director, Counselors, Board members, staff and volunteers. The Board is a working board that also involves a Project Management Team. The Board reviews the project's goals and their results, conducting planning, and address issues with individual clients or other issues of concern not directly addressed in the goals and results. This “Project Management Team” spearheads the continuous improvement effort by establishing process-based goals and periodically reviewing progress toward these goals. These efforts inform mission-critical activities-tutoring, preparations, family involvement, community involvement, strengthening support systems, budgeting, fundraising, etc.- well before outcomes are realized, giving the Executive Director an opportunity to adjust program activities to maximize their effectiveness.

### **c. constituency**

1. Immediate Bristol Place neighborhood
2. Neighboring Shadow Wood Mobile Home Park
3. N. Champaign and the Champaign-Urbana minority community more generally.
4. People who need help on poverty, housing and lending issues, locally and statewide.
5. National policy advocacy on housing, predatory lending, redlining, foreclosure, etc.

“Our services are primarily targeted to individuals and families at or below 80% of the median income level as assessed by **HUD**. The majority of our constituency is characterized as low and moderate income multiracial /ethnic with (a growing Hispanic base).” – Kraft Grant Application

### **3. Organizational history**

#### **a. origin and founders**

“Metanoia Centers is a faith-based community organization in the heartland of Illinois. It originated in 2000 when Revs. Charles B. Jackson and Dr. Eugene Barnes met with the city of Champaign to expand the supply of affordable homes for low income borrowers. “– Promotional Brochure

#### **b. mission**

Statement: “We seek to provide the means for people whose communities are in economic and social crises with high unemployment, drugs, violence and poor housing. We teach them to be agents for community empowerment and community transformation.”

Summary: “Metanoia Centers, Inc. is a not-for-profit community organization located in Champaign, Illinois. Rev. Charles B. Jackson and Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes incorporated the organization in 2000. The organization sprouted from the need to provide low-income individuals with affordable housing options, namely homeownership. As the organization began working on its goal to provide homeownership opportunities to individuals living in distressed communities, Metanoia Centers became engulfed in many other community projects, including foreclosure prevention, financial literacy, neighborhood awareness projects as well as criminal justice reform.” – From Kraft Grant Application

#### **c. stages of development**

1. Founded as a neighborhood community center. Original goal was to build houses and do community development. This was delayed by bureaucratic issues, so they concentrated on programs in the neighborhood and building trust / community.
2. Working on the immediate crime / violence / disinvestment / development issues in Bristol Place. Neighborhood walkarounds to build relationships and trust. Ran a CTC.

Neighborhood Watch. After School Program. Community cleanups and cookouts. Landlord outreach, engaging the city of Champaign on the 1-way street issue.

3. Building Homes in Bristol Place, w/ Roger Huddleston and other partners, arranging financing for buyers.
4. State/Regional Organizing w/ CIOP and other partners. Taking on banks on discriminatory lending /redlining. Advocacy and service work on helping low and moderate income people get loans. CSA's for personal economic growth and empowerment. Building homes in Danville, Peoria, St. Louis, and elsewhere regionally. #s 1-4 were more or less simultaneous and from the founding, with different emphasis at different times depending on opportunity and need.
5. Focus shift to predatory lending and the mortgage / foreclosure crisis, beginning 2004. Offering counsel and advice locally to people who need it on these issues.
6. Building CTC at Shadow Wood (2007-08), working to organize that community and bring it into contact with its neighbors.
7. Work with IPA and NPA on organizing and policy around these issues. Local, regional, and national. Involvement with the drafting of the FinReg bill.
8. Return to a more local focus, 2010-11. Working on a new community development agreement with the City of Champaign. Community Benefit organizing work on the UC2B project. Continuing work with National People's Action on banking and the foreclosure crisis, with Rev. Dr. Barnes as the current chairman of the board of NPA.

#### **d. chronology**

##### **2000**

- Founding, built organization with Rev. Jackson, bought crack house in Bristol Place and remade it into a neighborhood community center.
- Walkarounds, landlord outreach, advocacy with City of Champaign on building homes and fixing the 1-way streets issue (neighborhood streets had been changed to 1-way as an emergency policing measure at the height of the drugs / crime problems in the neighborhood in the '90's, but this was never changed back once the problems receded), beginning of neighborhood cleanups and cookouts.

##### **2001**

- Partnership with CIOP and work throughout central Illinois on banking, lending, and housing issues.
- Began Neighborhood Watch, Bristol Place CTC, After School Program, other programming and aid for the Bristol Place neighborhood.

- These activities were gathered under the umbrella of the Tragedy to Triumph project, and have continued on with different emphasis at different times from here to the present day.

## **2002**

- CIOP met with Office of Comptroller of the Currency in D.C. about CRA compliance.
- Organized a campaign with CIOP to pressure Union Planters for lending equity.
- Bought lots from the city to build 3 homes for renewal and affordable housing in Bristol Place.
- Procured HOME funds to help finance houses.
- Neighborhood CTC grant application with Douglass Center, Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club, Lakeside Terrace, Parkland Community College, Champaign County Public Schools, and Oakwood Trace Community Center

## **2003**

- Lending agreement for low/moderate income home buyers with National City.
- Review and Repair (Anti-predatory Lending) initiative gathered efforts around predatory and discriminatory lending practices under one program.
- First home built in Bristol Place (James 'Ervin' Allen, Roper & Bellefontaine.)
- Petition drive to change the 1-way streets in Bristol Place back to 2-way.

## **2004**

- Coalition work w/ PACE et al on home for the disabled.
- Home building work in the Elmwood Park section of Danville, as well as in Urbana, Peoria and St. Louis.
- Talks with Federal regulators about need for better lending oversight.
- Meeting with Charles Prince and other corporate leaders in NY on predatory lending.
- Second home built in Bristol Place (200 Bellefontaine).

## **2005**

- Beginning of work with Shadow Wood.
- Danville Housing and Economic Development Summit.
- Building houses w/ JCIO in Danville.

## **2006**

- Lobbying on the Illinois Mortgage Rescue Fraud Act, other work on predatory lending and fraud.
- Working with individuals (Karen Capel story) helping them to renegotiate their mortgages and avoid foreclosure.
- News-Gazette Article on what to watch for when it comes to home loans and predatory or fraudulent lending, or what to do if facing foreclosure.

## **2007**

- Presented at a symposium with Presidential candidates in Iowa

- Built CTC at Shadow Wood with Human Kinetics.
- Food giveaway w/ Central Illinois Food Bank(June)
- Asset Building Children (A.B.C.) initiative

## **2008**

- Food giveaway w/ Central Illinois Food Bank (Nov)
- Anti-Bullying program with Pastor Thomas Miller in Danville.
- Shadow Wood grant application for organizing and programs at the CTC.

## **2009**

## **2010**

- 2-way streets restored in Bristol Place.
- Comments in News Gazette on implementation problems with the Put Illinois to Work Program.
- Work with NPA on the FinReg legislation. Invitation to the signing ceremony.
- CRA testimony in Chicago.
- Bank Accountability Summit with NPA.
- Advocacy on foreclosure fraud against Bank of America, Chase, JP Morgan and GMAC et al, with NPA. Helped lobby for a foreclosure moratorium so these issues could be sorted out.

## **2011**

- Formed a ministerial alliance for community benefit to advocate for community needs on the UC2B project.
- Negotiating for a new community development agreement with the City of Champaign.
- Chaired the National People's Action Conference in Washington, D.C.

### **4. Key actors to interview**

#### **a. board members**

Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes  
 Rev. Charles B. Jackson  
 Ms. Karla Shelby (also works for C.)

#### **b. staff**

None currently.

#### **c. advocates who have been served and can tell the story**

**5a. Key actor interviews – need one from each of 4a, b, and c. These basic questions can be further developed into being more specific and contextual (ask for permission to tape the interviews or copy their responses down verbatim).**

Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes

**a. What is your background?**

Born in St. Louis, moved to Waukegan, IL at an early age and grew up and graduated from high school there. Attended business school in Milwaukee but dropped out. Moved to New York, NY in 1971, and became a barber. Stayed there for 13 years, and then moved to Washington D.C. in 1987 to be closer to family. Worked remodeling houses, then got a job as a program coordinator for Upward Bound at a Delaware community college, and got heavily involved in community organizing work there. Was called to the ministry in the 90's, and got his doctorate in theology from Slidell Baptist Seminary in Louisiana. Moved to Champaign to be close to his high school sweetheart, who he later married. Was a pastor at the Mount Olive Baptist Church in Champaign, and later the New Life Church of Faith in Danville / Urbana. Founded Bristol Place Metanoia Centers in 2000, with Rev. Charles B. Jackson, and became increasingly involved with organizing and advocacy work on the state and national levels.

**b. How long have you been with this organization(s) and in what capacities?**

Since the beginning, as founder, V.P., Executive Director

**c. What use is made of computers and how has this changed over the last 5 years?**

Specific sub-questions:

**1. Personal / Organizational Technology Use.**

Metanoia communicates with NPA, IPA and others in the network through phone (land line and mobiles), teleconferences, emails, blogs and for those so inclined, social media. NPA's most recent new site is <http://www.makewallstreetpay.org>. Our mailing lists are all of our affiliate leadership whereas we apprise others in local and national fights that they might join in with us. I am in the midst of preparing another website to update our site as it is not in synch with our affiliates.

Our CTC embraced an after school program that provided snacks supplied through the local food bank. Students were able to come in to surf the net, have assistance with homework, use the phone for local communication and be provided a safe place within the community. At times I employed paid staff and volunteers but was desirous to have parents police their own children, but we were unable to achieve this goal. Eventually the toll of running the CTC conflicted with my other main duties and i was compelled to close our unit.

2. **The website, and who runs it.** He has a website (<http://www.metanoiacenters.org/>) and runs it himself, but it hasn't been updated in a long time. He currently doesn't have CMS software and thus has to update it manually, which is difficult. As part of this project I'm helping him to find better hosting, install a CMS, and get much more of his organizational information online in anticipation of UC2B's arrival.
3. **Digital Archive.** Nothing formal or organized, though he does have quite a few digital documents about the organization. Again, since we're gathering all of this for this project anyway, I'm going to help him get it organized and get some of it online.

**d. What new uses of this kind of technology do you think will emerge over the next 5 years?**

Social media has opened up a new way to communicate yet its failing might be the lack of human contact often involved in texting and Facebook, Tweeting. As we explore and use media to connect and communicate we must envision this tool in such a manner as to address global needs and concerns and build cohorts to achieve this relief.

The churches might consider the media use in parlaying some of their ministries available to assist those who have needs and being able to provide a list of community resources that one might be able to access. A database could be maintained on those using this service and in some manner be able to track whether the community was able to serve that need and if not, what other assistance would be needed within our local framework to meet those unmet needs. No one would be able to fall through the cracks with such a network.

**e. What is your evaluation of the community engagement internship program?**

I couldn't get a direct answer on this, but from previous conversations, I know that Rev. Dr. Barnes has serious reservations about and criticisms of University engagement and outreach efforts. He feels that past University efforts in N. Champaign have been at best ineffective and at worst exploitative, and have left behind little of lasting value to community members in their wake. I've tried to take this history into account in my work, and made a strong effort to value his time and look for opportunities to provide tangible benefit to his organization and community in exchange for the time he takes to work with me.

**f. What is your evaluation of UC2B?**

He views it much as he would any other large government project or as anything involving the university intervening in the N. Champaign community. That is, with more than a little skepticism and suspicion, but also as an organizing opportunity for the community to assert its needs and its power, and redefine its relationships with these entities for the better. He thinks the UC2B process has been far too opaque and top-down so far, and wants to do what he can to help the community assert itself in the project and open it up, and ensure that it's ultimately meeting the community's needs and providing a real benefit.

**g. What are the key issues facing the organization?**

1. Economic and Community Development
2. Empowerment and Organization of the Community.
3. Sustainability, Continuity and Succession

**5b. Key actor interviews – need one from each of 4a, b, and c. These basic questions can be further developed into being more specific and contextual (ask for permission to tape the interviews or copy their responses down verbatim).**

Rev. Charles B. Jackson (Co-founder, President, board member. )

**a. What is your background?**

Born in Champaign, currently lives in Springfield. Has been in the African Methodist Episcopal ministry 37 years, including 25 years in Champaign. He met Rev. Dr. Barnes when he was pastor at the Bethel A.M.E. church in Champaign, and Rev. Dr. Barnes joined as a member. They became friends, and Rev. Jackson got Rev. Dr. Barnes involved with the Central Illinois Organizing Project (CIOP), a faith-based community organizing project. They decided they wanted to create a local chapter to focus this organizing work, and conceived of the Metanoia Centers as a vehicle for that work.

**b. How long have you been with this organization(s) and in what capacities?**

He has been involved since the beginning, as a founder, and as President. Since his move to Springfield in 2006, he is no longer involved in day-to-day operations, and serves in an advisory and board capacity.

**c. What use is made of computers and how has this changed over the last 5 years?**

Rev. Jackson is not an active computer user. He has an email account and occasionally checks it, but primarily conducts his business via telephone and in person. He has not participated much in the online aspects of Metanoia Centers' work. This illustrates how community organizations must still operate in multiple mediums and at multiple levels of engagement In order to reach everyone even in their own organizational structure, let alone the community at large.

**d. What new uses of this kind of technology do you think will emerge over the next 5 years?**

Rev. Jackson offered few specific applications, but expressed concern that technology and technology literacy are becoming hard requirements for participation in the economy, and emphasized the urgency for the community and community organizations to stay up with the pace of technological and social change.

**e. What is your evaluation of the community engagement internship program?**

N/A. Rev. Jackson knew nothing about our work before this interview, as he is not involved in day-to-day operations. He expressed more generally some of the same concerns Rev. Dr. Barnes has about the unequal and at-times exploitative relationship between the University and the community, but also stressed the need to find a way to coexist and even work together going forward.

**f. What is your evaluation of UC2B?**

As he is located in Springfield, Rev. Jackson was not familiar with the particulars of the UC2B project. When briefed on the details, he offered guarded approval, but wanted to know more about how the community would be involved and what provisions there would be for things like training, jobs, and economic development.

**g. What are the key issues facing the organization?**

Serving people caught in the economic crisis and let down by the decline of the public sector. Keeping up with the pace of technological and social change. Information, communication, and outreach.

**5c. Key actor interviews – need one from each of 4a, b, and c. These basic questions can be further developed into being more specific and contextual (ask for permission to tape the interviews or copy their responses down verbatim).**

Ms. Karla Shelby (board member / community member)

**a. What is your background?**

Born and raised in Champaign-Urbana. Briefly moved to Savannah, GA. Assistant Director at Bundles of Joy Learning Center, a local day care. Mother of 3, and foster-parent of 1.

Purchased first home in 2004, and discovered in 2005 that the construction was flawed and fixing it would require \$40,000 in repairs. She went looking for help, and was eventually referred to Metanoia Centers. They were able to find mistakes in the paperwork on the lender's part, as well as establish that inspections that should have been made before closing were not made. Eventually, with the help of Metanoia Centers, she was able to get out of the mortgage and purchase a second home, and her credit record was restored.

**b. How long have you been with this organization(s) and in what capacities?**

Board Member and volunteer since 2006. After Metanoia Centers helped her with her mortgage problem, she became interested in their work. Rev. Barnes then asked her to be on the board, and she has participated in many of their campaigns since then in both a board and

volunteer capacity. She is not involved in day-to-day operations, but is always ready to lend a hand when asked or needed.

**c. What use is made of computers and how has this changed over the last 5 years?**

Ms. Shelby emphasized the change in technological circumstances over time, both for individuals and in the wider society, and the need to be flexible and adapt to both the technological changes and the changing needs of the community.

The example she gave was from her own experience working with Metanoia Centers. At her previous job, she had regular email access on her work computer, and primarily dealt with organizational business via email and listservs.

However, in her current job working with children, she has much less computer time on a daily basis, and thus her engagement with Metanoia Centers has reduced somewhat, and also moved to mostly in-person and telephone interactions. This demonstrates that digital divide issues can be very complex and related to work, lifeways, status, and other factors, and are not restricted simply to economic access to technology or basic literacy.

**d. What new uses of this kind of technology do you think will emerge over the next 5 years?**

Ms. Shelby didn't have much to say about new uses, but emphasized the increasing intensity of use and the growing requirement to engage with technology on multiple fronts to simply participate in the economy and in society.

**e. What is your evaluation of the community engagement internship program?**

N / A. She had no experience with the program before this interview.

**f. What is your evaluation of UC2B?**

She was not aware of the UC2B project before this interview. When briefed on the particulars, she responded positively to the idea of the project, stressing the need of computer literacy and skills for people to get jobs and deal with problems such as the one she faced with housing.

**g. What are the key issues facing the organization?**

The economic crisis and jobs. Predatory lending, foreclosure, and other housing issues. Outreach and access to information.

**6a. Key issues (for each of the main issues from the three interviews)**

Issue #1 Community Development / Economic Development

**a. gather any relevant documents**

City, community members strive to help underdeveloped community -

<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/389>

Progress Association for Economic Development - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/140>

Improving Neighborhood Planning Input in Champaign's North End -

<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/850>

A Condensed Study Compiled for the Urban League of Champaign County -

<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/23>

An Assessment of Housing, Neighborhood Conditions, and attitudes Towards Northeast Champaign and Northwest Urbana: A Study to Improve Housing and Neighborhood Conditions in Northeast Champaign and Northwest Urbana - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/821>

UIUC Champaign/Urbana Area Revitalization Project: A discussion of why Champaign/Urbana lacks a Community based revitalization program - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/809>

Champaign City Consolidated plan, 2010-2014 - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/423>

**b. web search for local information**

<http://www.champaigncountyyedc.org/>

<http://www.ccrpc.org>

<http://www.theccbcc.com/>

<http://www.ccchamber.org/>

<http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/city-manager/economic-development/>

<http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/city-manager/frequently-asked-questions/faqs-economic-development/>

<http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/planning/>

<http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/neighborhood-services/>

<http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/neighborhood-services/neighborhood-programs/community-development-projects/>

<http://www.uillinois.edu/strategicplan/index.cfm>

**c. web search for best practices**

<http://www.community-wealth.org/index.html>

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx>

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/>

<http://www.cedworks.com/>

<http://www.lisc.org/>

<http://www.librariesmatter.com/Rural/documents/bestpractices.pdf>

**6b. Key issues (for each of the main issues from the three interviews)**

#2 Building community power and organization

**a. gather any relevant documents**

John Lee Johnson North First Street files - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/145>

John Lee Johnson Bio - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/231>

John Lee Johnson Clippings - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/144>

Douglas Community Center: Its History and Development and the Place of Its Program in the Community - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/635>

The History of Douglass Center: From Request to Reality -

<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/674>

Neighborhood Improvement Program for the Douglass Park Neighborhood -

<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/833>

Community Advocacy Depot - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/139>

Afyah: Social and Digital Technologies that Reach across the Digital Divide -

<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/194>

**b. web search for local information**

Champaign Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice - <http://cucpj.org/>

Bristol Place Metanoia Centers - <http://www.metanoiacenters.org/>

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center - <http://www.ucimc.org/>

Urbana Neighborhood Connections Center - <http://urbannectionscenter.org/>

Illinois People's Action - <http://illinoispuplesaction.org/>

CU Open Access Coalition - <http://cuopenaccess.org/>

African-American Institutions in Social Networking Sites -

<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/197>

Lincoln Trails Community Organization Directory - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/923>

**c. web search for best practices**

<http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org/>

<http://www.piconetwork.org/organizing/>

<http://www.thedartcenter.org/>

<http://www.echoditto.com/best/organizing>

## **6c. Key issues (for each of the main issues from the three interviews)**

#3 Sustainability, continuity, and succession

### **a. gather any relevant documents**

Urban League Closes - <http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/677>

The John Lee Johnson documents are relevant here as well, in terms of how much of his work died with him and wasn't sustained or carried on.

Community Engagement @ Illinois: Full Text of Book and supporting Data table -  
<http://eblackcu.net/portal/items/show/705>

### **b. web search for local information**

<http://goodworksconnect.org/resources>  
<http://www.dogoodconsulting.org/>  
<http://www.prairienet.org/engagement/>

### **c. web search for best practices**

<http://www.blueavocado.org/content/succession-planning-nonprofits-all-sizes>  
<http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/resources/managementleadership/ideas-work-strategic-planning-101>  
<http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/resources/managementleadership/strategic-planning-organizational-success>  
<http://www.boardsource.org>  
<http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/resources/managementleadership/board-effectiveness-expanding-answer>  
<http://www.blueavocado.org/content/all-hands-board-board-directors-all-volunteer-organizations>  
<http://www2.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2009/why-dont-board-members-do-what-theyre-supposed-to-do.aspx>  
[http://www.help4nonprofits.com/NP\\_Bd\\_Recruit\\_Article.htm](http://www.help4nonprofits.com/NP_Bd_Recruit_Article.htm)  
<http://philanthropyjournal.org/resources/fundraisinggiving/my-secret-getting-grants-needs-and-strategies>  
<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4173>  
<http://www.npguides.org/>  
<http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/resources/marketingcommunications/community-engagement-key-success>  
<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/software/page12365.cfm>

#### **6d. Combined Solution Narrative**

Community development, community organizing, and organizational sustainability are closely related problems that operate at different levels of a larger contextual issue of community disempowerment and marginalization. As each of these problems is an interlocking piece of a larger whole, and as our work and the coming of UC2B have overlapping implications for them all, I've combined the proposed solutions for the individual issues into a single comprehensive narrative.

These interrelationships are best illustrated by Rev. Dr. Barnes's own story of the problems he experienced when he set out to build new homes on vacant lots in the Bristol Place neighborhood in North Champaign. Metanoia Centers had lined up private sector partners to build the homes and partial private financing for the eventual purchasers, but experienced lengthy delays in the process of getting city approval to build and city grants to make up the balance of the financing. Those delays put Metanoia Centers in a financial crunch, and forced it to expand its building efforts to a much broader geographic area in order to keep revenue coming in to sustain operations during the delays. This was a community development initiative, taking place in the context of attempts to organize a localized community around a variety of pressing issues, and the difficulties experienced in the process threatened organizational sustainability and continuity and forced policy and operational choices which might not have been made otherwise.

Metanoia Centers ran into these problems because of many things that were lacking in the context in which they tried to undertake these building projects. They needed an environment where they could assert themselves in their relationship with the city and demand a timely and equitable response to a community development proposal. They needed a situation where public / private partnerships work better in general; for these processes to be streamlined and transparent. In the longer view, they needed the capacity to engage consistently over time at the level of city and county economic and urban planning policy, as opposed to making requests that would be perceived by policy makers as one-off projects, which might or might not fit into the context of those larger plans. Most of all, they needed the ability to bring political pressure to bear to help shape those larger plans so that their goals and projects would be sure of having a place within them.

They also needed sustainable sources of funding, labor, and other support for their community development efforts. They needed a broadly agreed upon policy and set of issues/demands, and for their local community to be engaged with and fully behind those efforts. They needed an environment with better collaboration and communication between organizations within the community, in order to coordinate and bring the full power of the community to bear on the policy making process.

Each of these pieces must work in concert and reinforce one another for effective and lasting change to be achieved. Organizations must be healthy and sustainable enough to have free reign to engage and organize the community around issues of concern, and to be tactically

flexible over time in this engagement. The community must in turn mobilize, organize, and support the organizations in order to put the necessary pressure on government and other power centers to ensure that desired policies are enacted and enforced. In this case, those policy goals revolve around the third piece, which is economic and community development.

In a context of economic crisis, housing crisis, high and possibly structural unemployment, and grave uncertainty about the future, these needs are both more pressing and more difficult to meet. Community organizations and nonprofits are facing acute budget crises, while at the same time they have unprecedented demand for their services and a dizzying array of community issues to address. Most are fighting simply to keep the doors open and to perform some kind of rough triage care for the overwhelming needs their constituencies present. It is difficult to contemplate big changes, long term strategies, and building for the future in such a context, but I would argue that these are also the only ways to break out of what is becoming a permanent and unsustainable state of crisis in our communities and organizations. These crises are structural and systemic, and require sustained engagement and solutions at that level.

### **UC2B as an Opportunity and a Catalyst**

This brings us to the current moment, and UC2B. The eventual fact of UC2B as a community technology project presents interesting opportunities for capacity building, organizing, and community empowerment. However, in the near term, UC2B is most interesting as an opportunity and a catalyst for organization and re-definition of the broader situation and relationships between the players involved. This project is putting all of the players (cities, university, business, community organizations, churches, interested individuals) in the same room and forcing them to work together. The project needs the community to actively participate and embrace it in order to succeed on its own terms. This gives the community an opportunity to assert and empower itself, provided it can come together to formulate a set of issues and goals, and then organize and advocate within and outside of the project to ensure those goals are met. In a larger sense, this project offers a chance for a re-engagement and a redefinition of the terms in the larger policy environment over time, and success in shaping UC2B can transcend the relatively narrow bounds of the project itself and grow into a sustained capacity to fully participate in and shape the larger policy and community environment going forward.

### **What Metanoia Centers Can Do**

Rev. Dr. Barnes and Metanoia Centers have already put forward a promising framework for undertaking this organizing and capacity building work around the UC2B project, in the form of a coalition for community benefit. This coalition has a clear initial set of immediate policy demands around employment and contracting equity and a community benefit set-aside fund for supporting community efforts to address digital divide issues. The coalition also has a longer-term vision of pushing the policy orientation of the UC2B project in a community direction, and thereby creating a new model for interaction between the community, the cities, and the university, and changing the overall policy environment for the future.

These are positive developments, and address many of the problems encountered in the house building effort above by taking a longer view and a more systematic and coordinated approach to change. The primary unanswered questions are around organizing and sustainability. Can the community (both organizations and individuals) be effectively organized around this project, and can the resources be found to sustain that organization and its constituents over time? The coalition is a great start, but is vulnerable in that it relies on the health and continued engagement and cooperation of a few key individuals and their organizations. If anything goes wrong with the key players, the whole project is endangered. However, if the coalition is expanded to take in many more organizations, and the community is organized and mobilized around the project and its possibilities, then the resulting coalition will not only be strong and sustainable enough to accomplish its goals within the project, it could also find itself in a position where it can think about addressing much bigger and longer-term structural and systemic issues.

### **Suggested Steps**

1. Build internal organizational capacity and make long term contingency and succession plans to ensure that Rev. Dr. Barnes and Metanoia Centers are able to lead and organize on these issues for the long haul.
2. Reach out and build more inter-organizational relationships and partnerships in the context of the community benefit coalition and the UC2B project.
3. Seek out a new round of funding in the new UC2B and coalition contexts. Partner with other key actors to write grants and build independent community capacity and power to run programs, organize constituents, address digital divide issues, and complement and build upon whatever policy and resource gains the coalition is able to get within the UC2B process. If UC2B is to be a real change in the long term, capacity and literacy to use it for empowerment are going to have to be built from within the community and organizations.
4. Begin raising awareness of UC2B with community constituents and relating it to the larger problems the community faces. Lay the groundwork to take advantage of the broader organizing opportunity that the coming of UC2B presents.
5. Work to re-cast and re-shape UC2B in light of the larger community development question and the pressing problems of the economic crisis. Do everything possible to make the issues bigger than just this project, and to frame the project as the first step in a bigger fight to change the game and correct longer term and systemic inequalities.

### **6. On site observation (for each time you volunteer in the organization)**

This section is not applicable in the case of the Metanoia Centers, since they don't currently run programs in which one can participate as a volunteer. For my volunteer efforts this semester, I've proposed to Rev. Dr. Barnes that I a) help him get his digital archives in order, and b) help him get whatever portion of those he wants online up on his website, and to get his website to a place where he can easily update it by changing hosts and installing a CMS. He readily agreed to both of these suggestions.

I've met with Rev. Dr. Barnes in person for extended appointments twice, corresponded regularly over email, and talked with him at multiple UC2B meetings where we both were in attendance. That's how I've compiled the information currently in this report.

Rev. Dr. Barnes is board chairman for National People's Action, a national community organizing group, and he was very busy with preparation for and travel to their annual conference for over the past few weeks. This has limited our time in-person to date, but with that event now past, I intend to work more closely and regularly with him as the semester goes on, both on the film and on the digital archive / website project.

**a. when and number of people involved**

N/A

**b. type of activity engaged in**

N/A

**c. un-met needs**

As gleaned from conversations with Rev. Barnes and my past work with his organization, The Metanoia Centers' current unmet needs include a stable volunteer base and/or sustained commitment from the local community, a stable source of funding for staffing and programs, and a better relationship with the City of Champaign and other local power brokers that might allow for more thoroughgoing and intense community development efforts in the Bristol Place neighborhood.

At the community level, Rev. Dr. Barnes gives his description of the needs as follows: "The exploratory process yielded a number of common needs for Shadow Wood and Bristol Place area, most notable the need for public / private partnerships to address unmet needs. The social service needs included, but not limited to, activities / programs for children, exploring adult education for 'health families', welfare to work initiatives and civic renewal." – Kraft Grant Application

**7. List of other organizations that are considered peers and partners**

**Spin-off and affiliate organizations:**

1. Genuine Intelligent Respectful Ladies Soaring (GIRLS) (Champaign)
2. Champaign County Black Chamber of Commerce
3. Life Line (Jericho Baptist Church) (Champaign)
4. Bridgewater-Sullivan Community Life Center
5. Abundant Life in Christ II (Champaign)
6. Zeek's Boxing Club Cardio Fitness (Champaign)
7. New Life Ministries of Danville
8. Tap In Leadership Academy (Champaign)

9. The Sankofa Center (TYAC -Teaching Youth About Culture) (Danville)
10. Come Now Children Come (Champaign)
11. Connected Hands Helping Other (Champaign)
12. Morning Glory Outreach and Resources Program (Peoria)
13. Charmaine Star Light Foundation (Delaware)
14. The Great I Am (Delaware)
15. Hepatitis Association of Delaware (HAD) Delaware

**Partners:**

New Life Church of Faith, Danville/Urbana (Rev. Barnes' current church.)  
Mount Olive Baptist Church Champaign (Rev. Barnes' previous church.)  
Apostolic Faith Church (neighborhood church in Bristol Place)  
Eastern Illinois Food Bank  
National Training and Information Center of Chicago → National Peoples' Action  
Central Illinois Organizing Project → Illinois Peoples' Action (Don Carlson, Bloomington)  
Salem Baptist (Rev. Claude Shelby)  
Bethel AME (Rev. Charles Jackson)  
Illinois Worknet Center (Brian Bell)  
State Department of Human Resources (Damaris Rodriguez, disabled workers @ Shadow Wood)  
City of Champaign Neighborhood Services Department (food giveaway)  
JCIO (Tyson Parks, building houses in Danville)  
St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Urbana

**Funders:**

Human Kinetics (also helped build Shadow Wood Lab)  
Roger Huddleston Homes (also homebuilding and Shadow Wood lab)  
National City (also lending on the Bristol Place homes)  
Bank One  
Ameren (Bristol Place CTC)  
Wal Mart  
Ocwen Financial Services (also mortgage renegotiations)  
Select Portfolio Services (also mortgage renegotiations)  
Chase  
RegionsBank  
Federal Home Loan Bank  
Mott Foundation  
Illinois Asset Building Group  
Dominican Sisters of Springfield

**9. Full contact information for organization and key leaders**

Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes.  
Metanoia Centers, Inc.

1313 N. Clock St.  
Champaign, IL 61820  
P: 217.xxx.xxxx  
Fax: 217.xxx.xxxx  
[xxx@xxxxxxxx.org](mailto:xxx@xxxxxxxx.org)

**10. Agreements for participation in class March 14 and May 2 by community organization leaders**

Rev. Dr. Barnes initially agreed to come on the 14<sup>th</sup> and blocked it off on his calendar, but now this is in jeopardy due to the need to be at the Metanoia Centers Monday morning to wait for utility companies to show up and restore the cable and phones following his National People's Action trip. If this is done before the event is over, he will attend, but otherwise, he can't leave until they arrive.